



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Monroe County volunteers and staff at the DHS table (left-right): volunteer Geri Davis, county director Terrence Beurer, DHS board chair Carol Frederick and Polly Carroll.



Celebrate children Monroe County 2007

From Polly Carroll, Community Resource Coordinator

Monroe County DHS, Monroe

CarrollP@michigan.gov

Monroe County celebrated its twelfth annual "Celebrate Children" festival April 28 at the Frenchtown Square Mall. More than 50 area agencies, schools, churches, libraries, juvenile court, law enforcement, safety and health service agencies participated in this free, fun-filled annual event that provided helpful information and resources in our community. DHS Board members donated the funds for our kids craft project where I participated with DHS volunteers **Madlyn Mathis** and **Geri Davis** and DHS Board president **Carol Frederick**. Together, we helped more than 400 children design and decorate personalized wrist band compasses and/or beach-themed refrigerator magnets during the four-hour event.

The DHS table distributed literature on foster care licensing and recruitment provided by licensing specialist **Tom Schroeder** who was promoting and recruiting foster parents.

At 1 p.m. Monroe County DHS director **Terrence Beurer** provided the community with the past year's CPS and foster care statistics while reminding the community of volunteer opportunities and the ongoing need for foster parents. He also spoke to the community about the latest Monroe County initiatives including Family Treatment Court, Family to Family, and Project Second Chance, where children from the youth home are paired with an animal from the Humane Society. The kids learn responsibility and the animals get socialized.

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Take our daughters and sons to work day

From Susan Bailey-Carman, Director
Allegan County DHS, Allegan
Bailey-carman@michigan.gov

The Allegan County DHS office participated in "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" April 26. The day is sponsored

by the Ms. Foundation for Women and it has become a tradition many of our employees' children look forward to.

Staff members provided a full day of scheduled activities for our visitors. After introductions were made during a continental breakfast, children painted and decorated frames suitable for the picture taken later in the day with their parent/sponsor.

The children traveled a short distance for a field trip to the Allegan County Family and Probate Court for a visit with Judge Michael Buck. He told the children about the court system and provided hands-on experience, such as sitting at the witness stand and even sitting in the judge's chair! There were also tours of the Allegan County Youth Home and its Cheever Treatment Center where the



These children visited "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" at Allegan DHS April 26.

children heard about juvenile justice programs provided by the court and by DHS. As they were leaving the court room Judge Buck gave each child a Hershey's Kiss and a Hershey's Hug. He told them to tell their parents, "The judge gave me a hug and a kiss today!"

Later the children, their parents, and many other staff members enjoyed a Noon potluck and the afternoon included some individual time with parents in their office cubicles.

Our group photo above includes eight-year-old Tori (middle row, pretty in pink) and her brother, 10-year-old Alex (middle row, in red). Tori has been re-diagnosed with leukemia after a three-year remission. She will begin new treatments, including a bone marrow transplant, from her brother. The transplant process begins May 7 and her mom, Heather, our DHS employee, must take a 5-7 month leave of absence to care for Tori.

Allegan County employees will be donating some annual leave to her and participating in other fund raising activities. Any other DHS employees who would like to donate time or money can contact the Allegan County DHS office, (269) 673-7778 for information.

Our prayers are with them!



DHS Olympian in training? Iron-Dickinson DHS director **Bob Roberge** recently participated in a fundraiser for Caring House, a local domestic violence shelter. U.S. Olympic Training Center boxers from Northern Michigan University participated in the event. Roberge (left) spars with Olympic prospect Luis Gomez from Rock Springs, Wyo. "He had every advantage over me – youth, speed, experience and training," Roberge said. "I did outweigh him by about 60 pounds but I would hardly call that an advantage."

Special event honors Montcalm County volunteer services member

From Terry King, Community Resource Coordinator
Ionia-Montcalm DHS, Stanton
KingT2@michigan.gov

There's a very special senior working in the Volunteer Services Program in the Montcalm County Department of Human Services office.

Helen Hansen turned 90 on April 29 and has been contributing to easing the workload in our office since October 2005.

Working through the Experience Works program, Helen puts in 20 hours a week and is rarely if ever late or sick. Helen even asks for more hours from time to time.

Experience Works assists seniors in rural communities that face barriers to employment.

The office just loves her being around. She doesn't act 90 at all. Helen is such an icon around the building that we held a special fund-raising event to honor her.

Our 45-employee office really rallied around to raise more than \$285 to give her a grand birthday party.

The money purchased \$147 worth of Lotto tickets – one of Helen's favorite things to do in her spare time. We also gave her a huge cake, a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and several party favors.

We quickly discovered that her memory is absolutely fabulous! Helen talked at her party about her earliest childhood memory.

As a toddler she escaped her mom's watchful eye and ran down to the train depot where her dad worked. She loved the activity around the train station. That figures, indeed she is still our Energizer Bunny.

This dear sweet woman, who has totally captured all of our hearts, has endless energy. Helen also volunteers after putting in time with our office at the local American Legion just down the road. It is not surprising that the mayor of Stanton decreed April 29th as Helen Hansen Day.

Congratulations Helen, we all love you dearly.



Helen with her Lotto tree gift.
Inset photo: Terry King, Helen Hansen,
Ionia-Montcalm director Phil Larsen.



Date: Feb. 26
To: Angelo Nicholas, Director
Macomb County DHS, Clinton Township
Subj: Macomb County DHS in Mt. Clemens

I recently became involved in the foster parenting program in the state of Michigan. I have just completed my initial PRIDE training in Macomb County and I am awaiting the completion of the licensing process. I would like to take a minute to advise you of the very positive experience I had while going through my PRIDE training in Macomb County.

I have become involved in the foster parenting system because I have been made aware of a situation involving a young girl who has been separated from her family. My wife and I have a very good relationship with the family who has two siblings of the child and we are hoping to foster and then adopt this third child. We believe we can help her grow up with a strong sense of identity by letting her have a growing and nurturing relationship with her brother and sister.

We entered into the program very apprehensively. We had numerous worries and concerns; we were worried both about our own security and that of the child. However, our concerns were quickly alleviated by the professionals teaching the PRIDE classes. These professionals were very approachable and reassuring. The PRIDE trainers helped us become better informed and conscious of foster parenting needs and procedures. Now that all of our concerns have been eased we are excitedly looking ahead to the next stage of the licensing process. My wife and I have always done whatever we could to help out those less fortunate than ourselves but the foster parenting classes have shown us that there is much more we can do to help provide a good life to a child who by no actions of their own are in a hard and intimidating situation.

I am sure your office gets inundated with an abundance of letters both complaining and offering suggestions of how your programs should operate. However, I wanted to take the time to let you know that the professionals from the Macomb County Department of Human Services were both informative and engaging. My wife and I felt inspired by the dedication the various trainers showed in regards to the topics and issues we discussed. My wife and I are from Wayne County and we took the classes in Macomb County because the child we want to foster and then adopt is a ward of the state through Macomb County. Although we were from a nearby county the trainers were very supportive of us. They always took the time to answer any questions we had and they always took the time to speak with us both before and after class. The trainers took as much time as needed to give explanations and answer any inquiries we had. My wife and I both feel that these professionals were very devoted and wholehearted to their mission of helping us get through the training in order to help out the children they protect.

I wanted to make you aware of how excellent a job my wife and I feel they did. Thank you for your time and I hope these individuals receive the acknowledgment they deserve for their professionalism and commitment to the youth of our state. I have contacted the governor as well as our local state politicians because I feel that the generosity and true concern displayed by the trainers deserves to be recognized. The daily issues these professionals must face each day would appear to be more than I could handle. However, all of the trainers we met throughout our training were very open and honest about their experiences and they displayed a genuine love for what they were doing. I appreciate the training and education the PRIDE trainers have provided for me and I feel that it has made my wife and I better people and it has inspired us to become much more involved in the foster care issue. Thank you very much.

Raymond Benedict

Detroit

■ *PRIDE is an acronym for Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education.*

Date: Feb. 23
To: Barb Klingenmaier, CPS Manager
Muskegon DHS, Muskegon
Subj: Kudos to Trina Sandifer

Just a note to say that Trina Sandifer has been involved in assisting us with some very tough cases lately. Trina is so professional, and so helpful, that I wanted to alert you of her outstanding service to us and to our clients. Sometimes, we forget to say "thank you" and "GREAT JOB!" I did not want to let this be one of those times. At this morning's meeting with a client and our staff, Trina literally changed the life of the child and mother in this case. Mom feels supported in trying to keep her child safe, and knows that "the system" is there to support her in her efforts. Please alert Trina of our gratitude and be proud that you have staff that in spite of their horrendous caseloads, thankless jobs, and tough work. They continue make a difference!

Sue Johnson, Director

Every Woman's Place, Muskegon

■ *Trina Sandifer is a CPS specialist at Muskegon County DHS; Every Woman's Place is a crisis center for women & their children.*

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
Marianne Udow, Director • Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

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intercepted
and otherwise